

A C C O U N T  
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E X T R A C T E D F R O M T H E  
L O N D O N M E D I C A L J O U R N A L

F O R T H E Y E A R 1789.

P A R T T H E S E C O N D.

With the Copy of a Letter since communicated on the same  
Subject

To Mess. TAYLOR AND DAVY, DRUGGISTS,  
L O N D O N:

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Printed by JOHN RIDER, No. 36, Little Britain.

MDCCLXXXIX.



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To Dr. SIMMONS.

SIR,

FROM the very favourable account we have received of the medicinal properties of a bark which has lately been sent us, we are induced to trouble you with a letter in its favour from a Physician of eminence in the West Indies, hoping by this means the Public may become acquainted with a valuable remedy, and have an opportunity of judging how far it merits the encomiums which he gives it.

This bark is known by the name of *Cortex Angusturæ*. We are able to supply with it any persons who may wish to give it a trial; and if its good effects should be confirmed by experience here, we shall take care to procure an ample and regular supply of it.

We remain, Sir,

Your obliged and obedient Servants,

TAYLOR and DAVY.

*Little Britain,*  
March 24, 1789.

To



*To Messieurs TAYLOR and DAVY.*

GENTLEMEN,

**I** Have ordered to be shipped to you from Grenada, a quantity of Bark which has been brought hither by the Spaniards from Angustura in South America, and has acquired great reputation here in all those cases in which we have been accustomed to employ the Peruvian Bark, over which it has this advantage, that a smaller dose of it will produce the same effect.

With respect to its sensible properties, it is exceedingly bitter, and leaves a pungent heat in the mouth; it has a light aromatic smell; its exterior surface is almost white, and its interior of a light brown colour. In many cases of fever I have used it with success; and in two or three cases I have found a single dose have a striking good effect. As an external application in a putrid fever I had lately a strong proof of its efficacy. In this case the patient's skin was of a greenish yellow colour, and had a number of large livid spots; he had hiccough and a vomiting of dark-coloured dissolved blood; a mortification had begun in his throat, and his strength was exceedingly exhausted. As neither the Peruvian bark nor any thing else could be retained on the stomach, and as I did not think it right  
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to trust to this Bark given by injection alone, I ordered flannel wetted with a strong warm decoction of this bark to be wrapped round his body and extremities, and kept constantly wet. On seeing him a few hours after I was agreeably surprised on finding the livid spots removed, the greenish colour of the skin gone off, and the hiccough and vomiting ceased. He could now keep the Peruvian bark, mixed with a strong infusion of this Bark, on his stomach, and soon after was able to take any kind of nourishment. As he complained of being uneasy at laying so long in wet clothes, his attendants discontinued the use of the fomentation, and in a few hours the greenish yellow colour of the skin and the livid spots returned, but neither the vomiting nor hiccough. The fever was now increased considerably, and his strength diminished. The fomentation was again had recourse to with the same or even better success than before; for, when it had been applied a few hours, he was so much better as to be able to get out of bed and sit up without assistance: it was, however, discontinued again for the same reason as at first, and the symptoms again returning, he died in two days.

In this case it evidently appears that beneficial effects attended its use; and it is much to be regretted that the obstinacy of the patient prevented

prevented the continuance of a remedy which, even under the circumstances I have mentioned, afforded such a rational hope of success.

This Bark is used with great advantage among our slaves here as a bitter and stomachic. It has also done great service in the dysentery, a disease in this country both frequent and fatal.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient, humble Servant,

J. EWER.

Trinidad,  
Aug. 20, 1788.

*Farther Account of the Bark described in the preceding Article; being an Extract of a Letter from Alexander Williams, M. D. Physician at Trinidad. Communicated to Dr. Simmons by Mr. William Blizard, F. R. S. and S. A. Surgeons of the London Hospital.*

THE Bark in question is brought to us by the Spaniards from Angustura in South America, packed in straw, in pieces from one to two feet in length, and from an inch to an inch and a half in width.

It is of a brownish yellow colour; has a raw unpleasant smell, and a very disagreeable bitter taste, without any aromatic warmth. Its raw smell, however, I attribute entirely to its freshness,



ness, as it loses it in a great measure, if not wholly, by being dried in the sun or baked over a gentle heat, and even acquires in its room somewhat of an aromatic one, and the bitter becomes less disagreeable.

It gives out readily to either a watery or spirituous menstruum, tinging the fluid of a pale gold colour. It is in one of these modes, chiefly however in the latter, that our planters use it among their negroes in fever, and pains of the belly, stomach, &c.

The tree from which it is got is not yet known here; but we hope soon to become acquainted with it, as some of our botanical gentlemen have written for the flowers, &c. in order to investigate it thoroughly.

The virtues of this bark seems to be pretty similar to those of the Peruvian bark; in some of these it has the advantage even over the latter, particularly in that of putting a stop to the paroxysms of an intermittent fever more speedily, less quantity of it being required, seldom more than six or eight doses being necessary; nay, I am told by some gentlemen, that a single dose has often had the desired effect.

It has, too, this farther advantage, that it does not cause that disagreeable sense of weight and fulness in the stomach, with costiveness, which  
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the Peruvian bark most frequently occasions, but keeps the belly gently open. It is found of the greatest service in diarrhœas, dysenteries, and other complaints of the intestines, which the negroes are so subject to; and I believe will always prove useful in every disorder arising from laxity and want of tone in the muscular fibre. As an external application I have little or no experience of its effects. I should be much surprised, however, if it should not prove equally useful as it has done as an internal one. I am confident great advantage may be expected from it when externally applied to gangrene, old flaccid ulcers, and the like complaints.

Dr. Ewer assures me he has seen the best effects from an external application of it in a case of fever that was highly putrid. In this case the whole skin had already become discoloured with livid spots, a mortification had taken place in the throat, and even the black vomiting and hiccough had come on.

I will not at present say any thing more than merely what relates to my own case, and then leave you to judge whether this new remedy does not deserve your and every other medical person's candid trial.

About a month ago, after much previous fatigue, and exposure to noxious effluvia, I was seized



seized with fever. I immediately took some emetic tartar, and discharged a great quantity of bile; after which the fever intermitted: being very costive, however, I thought it proper to take some aperient medicine; but before this had begun to operate my fever returned, attended with a violent pain in the side and great difficulty of breathing, for which I applied a blister to the affected part, and took some more emetic tartar; the fever then again intermitted, and I immediately began the use of the Peruvian bark, not being yet acquainted with this new Bark. I found, however, that the fever, notwithstanding the use of the bark, assumed a tertian type, and continued so for three weeks, when I was advised to make trial of this new Bark; which I did, and and by its means got rid of the fever immediately, it having returned but once after its use. A few days ago, after sitting up two or three nights successively, I was again attacked with fever; but not having any of the new Bark by me, I had recourse to the Peruvian bark, of which however, I could not take more than four doses, before I was obliged to discontinue its use from the disagreeable sense of weight and fulness that it caused: indeed I rejected the fifth dose; upon which I sent to Dr. Ewer, and procured a little of the new Bark, and took a strong infusion of it with madei-

ra wine during one day, which put a final stop to the fever.

Trinidad,  
Sept. 11, 1788.

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*Copy of a Letter communicated to Messrs. Taylor and Davy, by Dr. O'Meara, of Trinidad. Since the Publication of the foregoing in the Medical Journal.*

Trinidad, 22d. March, 1789.

GENTLEMEN,

I Have on trial found the *Cortex Angusturæ* answer my most sanguine expectations. Independent of common intermittent fevers, where it is, at least, equally effectual with the best Peruvian bark, I found it singularly serviceable in three Cases, where the fever was complicated with very alarming symptoms from other causes. The First was a Negro Boy, about fourteen, addicted for some years to eating earth. This boy was brought home to me from my lower settlement, greatly bloated, with a great heat in his skin, a low exceedingly quick pulse, difficulty of breathing, and unable either to stand or speak; in a word, in such a state of langour and oppression, that I absolutely despaired of saving his life. I immediately gave him a puke which operated both ways, and after its operation,

tion, applied a blister to his breast, and gave him the *Cortex Angusturæ*, the effects of which in checking the quickness of the pulse, raising it, and removing the stupor, greatly exceeded any thing I could have promised myself from the most approved medicines. It is worthy of notice, that, until this change was very visible, he could not, though sensible, be prevailed with to take any kind of nourishment; so that it must have been entirely owing to the medicines applied, and I think it does not admit of a doubt, that the Bark had the principal share in the cure: the boy recovered fast, and is now, at the distance of about three months, in perfect health.

The Second Case was that of a strong healthy negro woman, who had absented herself for some time from the estate, and returned with slight symptoms of the *mal d'estomac*. After the usual evacuations, I put her under a course of steel medicines, to which I afterwards added some aloetic preparations, as she began to swell and the steel did not operate by stool. Notwithstanding this treatment for the space of three weeks, she continued swelled, a hot fever came on, attended with a low but very quick pulse, and pains in her loins and calves of her legs, which disabled her from walking or standing erect. She also loathed all kinds of nourishment. In this situation,



I gave her a decoction of the *Angustura Bark*, mixed with a solution of sal martis, which in three days gave her relief, and in about three weeks restored her to such a state as made all other applications but the cold bath unnecessary.

The Third Case was so nearly similar to the last, differing only in degree of danger, which was not so great, that I shall not dwell upon it. Upon the whole I conclude with giving as my opinion, that the *Angustura Bark* is not so astringent as the Peruvian, that it exerts its influence on the human body more speedily, and is preferable in all cases where the tone of the stomach and bowels is so far reduced that the life of the patient depends on its immediate restoration \*.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient Servant,

JOHN O MEARA.

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\* In addition to the preceeding Accounts, Dr. Ewer in another Letter says, " That exclusive of the febrifuge virtues, the *Cortex Angusturæ* is found to be an excellent remedy against worms, highly useful in all cases of debility, and particularly so in that species of cachexy, called in the West Indies *le Mal d'Estomac*."

*In consequence of the successful Trials made on  
the Cortex Angusturæ, Messrs. TAYLOR and  
DAVY, Druggists, in Little Britain, London,  
have procured a considerable Supply, and can furnish  
any Persons who may wish to make trial of it.*